

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANNE TITUS HILBY
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200
ANNE.HILBY@AZAG.GOV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Cites Big Decline in Smoking 10 Years After Tobacco Settlement

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Nov. 21, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard today made note of the significant decline in cigarette smoking in Arizona and across the nation since the landmark agreement between state attorneys general and big tobacco was reached 10 years ago.

Sunday, Nov. 23, marks the 10-year anniversary of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), a settlement among attorneys general of 46 states, including Arizona, and six territories and more than 40 tobacco companies.

The legal settlement ranks as the largest in world history. Total payments over 25 years are projected to exceed \$206 billion nationally, and payments will continue as long as cigarettes are sold. Arizona alone has received \$759,928,800 since the settlement was finalized in 1998.

"This agreement was an extraordinary public health achievement for Arizona and the nation," Goddard said. "The health benefits have been enormous and will continue far into the future."

The number of U.S. adults who smoke has dropped below 20 percent for the first time, according to a report released this week by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The report said 19.8 percent of adults were smokers in 2007. That amounts to a 20 percent reduction since 1997 when 24.7 percent of adults smoked.

According to data from the CDC and the U.S. Census Bureau, 5.8 million American high school students smoked in 1997. Ten years later, that number fell to 3.5 million – a 40 percent drop.

Youth smoking rates have shown a significant decline in Arizona as well. A 2005 study conducted by the Arizona Department of Health Services found that smoking among high school students declined from 31 percent in 1997 to 20 percent in 2005, a decrease of 35 percent. Rates for middle school students declined from 19 percent in 1997 to 8 percent in 2005, a decrease of over 50 percent. This report can be found at http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/tepp/pdf/youth_tobacco_survey.pdf.

"While any high school smokers are too many, a decline of this magnitude in Arizona and across the nation shows we are on the right track," Goddard said.

Goddard served as the Co-Chair of the Tobacco Committee of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) from 2006-2008. In that capacity, he led the efforts of the 42 settling states in enforcement of the MSA, youth and public health issues and interactions with tobacco companies.

The MSA was the result of a years-long legal battle in which attorneys general across the country filed lawsuits asking for restraints against the tobacco industry and monetary damages for state funds spent treating smoking-related illnesses. The attorneys general also accused the companies of marketing tobacco products to children and of concealing the dangers associated with tobacco use.

The MSA imposed sweeping changes in tobacco advertising, banned tobacco companies from targeting children, allocated funding for tobacco education efforts and provided annual payments to states based on the number of cigarettes sold in the country.

MSA spawned a cultural shift in societal attitudes toward smoking, Goddard said, resulting in a healthier population as a whole.

"The past ten years have changed the way we as a society view tobacco use," Goddard noted. "Ten years ago, Joe Camel was everywhere and the Marlboro Man was a Western icon. One of the most important things the MSA accomplished was to change the way the tobacco companies market their products. The MSA introduced protections and restrictions that were unheard of 10 years ago."

These advertising restrictions reduced mainstream exposure to images of tobacco products, and, with it, tolerance for exposure to cigarette smoke. Since the MSA, two dozen states, including Arizona, have banned smoking in public places such as bars and restaurants.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. consumption has declined by more than 100 billion cigarettes over the past decade. This decline is highly significant because the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 80 percent of lung cancer deaths in women and 90 percent of such deaths in men can be attributed to smoking.

Assistant Attorney General Ann Uglietta received the NAAG Loveland Award for Contributions to the Attorney Generals' Work to Combat Harm to Public Health Associated with Tobacco in June 2008.

For additional information, please contact Megan Erickson at (602) 542-8012.

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